



Dantzler

HSUS Coordinates Animal Rescue

Hundreds
Of Animals
Saved in
Idaho
Flood

"At least 500 animals were reunited with their owners," said HSUS's Frantz Dantzler. "The HSUS sent me to Idaho to help the animals because that's what The HSUS is all about."

Following the calamitous collapse of the controversial Teton Dam in Southeastern, Idaho, The HSUS sent Dantzler to the scene. As The HSUS Director of Field Services and Investigations, his assignment was to do all in his power to coordinate efforts to help animals in the stricken area.

At least 80 billion gallons of water had swept down the upper Snake River valley. Most of the residents barely had time to get into their cars and race away from the onrushing waters. There was little time to arrange safekeeping for pets and livestock.

Eventually, the waters claimed the lives of more than 14,000 animals. According to Dantzler, the combined efforts of The HSUS and local animal welfare groups led to the rescue of more than 250 pets and several hundred livestock.

"It's impossible to tell how many animals we helped indirectly," said Dantzler. "But I do think it was only through our persistence that hay was air dropped and trucked to stranded cattle."

Prior to his actual arrival in Idaho, director Dantzler made many attempts to communicate with people in the area as well as state and federal government agencies. At first, his calls to government agencies met with little success. He was informed people or authorities within the stricken area must request assistance themselves.

"It was very frustrating," said Dantzler. "The situation needed coordination. The proper governmental agencies needed to know when and where they were needed. But the disconnected phone and power lines in the area made it impossible to call in or out."

People needed to be reminded the animals needed help too. "There is no established disaster relief system for the animals," said Dantzler. "The Idaho flood and other disasters The HSUS has been involved in make it crystal clear that such a system is needed."

"The key factors in any disaster relief plans are the local people," said Dantzler. "I couldn't have coordinated animal relief efforts in Idaho without the aid and assistance of The Bonneville County Humane Society."

It was the local people who thought up the idea of using posters for communication in the flooded area. "Those posters made people aware of the temporary shelter we set up on the soccer field of Rick's College," said Dantzler. "The posters eventually made the authorities come to us for help. The posters helped people realize someone was there to help the animals."

One poster was entitled "Animals Found". It directed people to come to the temporary shelter to pick up their lost pets.

Dantzler also had the assistance of The

National Live Trap Corporation of Tomahawk, Wisconsin. He phoned their president and asked for the loan of wire cages to house pets. The National Live Trap Corporation had the cages shipped in immediately. Lonnie Johnson, Executive Director of The Humane Society of Utah also sent people and equipment to the scene.

Ill and injured animals were euthanized. Cats and dogs were given shots of canine and feline distemper vaccine. Eventually, nearly 200 tons of hay found its way to stranded livestock. Pets were brought to the shelter by owners without housing. Other "found" pets were brought by both officials and citizens alike. The temporary shelter soon became the focal point of all animal relief measures.

Euthanasia was one of Dantzler's biggest problems. Apparently some local cowboys were "putting down" injured and ill animals when they came across them. Some authorities seemed to be afraid of euthanizing an animal without the owner's permission. Dantzler finally established a humane procedure agreed upon by all authorities. Basically, upon recommendation of Dantzler and the Bonneville group, The Civil Defense officials gave the O.K. for livestock euthanasia. Pets were euthanized at the temporary shelter by injections of sodium phenobarbital.

"The longer we stayed there, the more cooperation we experienced," said Dantzler. "Once the citizens and authorities discovered we were serious people with a real role in the disaster, they began to work hand in hand with us. Even after the waters had receded, the local authorities went to the Bonneville Society for help in rebuilding municipal animal shelters."

LaVern Haney:
Humanitarian & Helicopter Pilot



LaVern Haney is a helicopter pilot for the Reeder Flying Service of Twin Falls, Idaho. Shortly after the dam burst, Mr. Haney was hired by The Army Corps of Engineers to trace the course of the flood.

After he had been flying for several hours following the path of the water the growing darkness forced Mr. Haney to abandon his task and head for home. As he was approaching Idaho Falls, he spotted the emergency flashers of a jeep-type vehicle in a flooding field.

Sensing there might be trouble below, Mr. Haney circled the field for a better look. Two men were standing near the edge of the rampaging waters throwing rocks. As he flew closer, LaVern noticed the men were attempting to stop four calves from swimming into deeper waters by throwing rocks in front of them. Nevertheless, the disoriented calves were swimming out further.

Haney brought his craft down and turned on his landing lights. The noise of the chopper's blades and its lights turned the calves back to shallow water. Haney stayed with it until the men were able to save the young creatures.

Mr. Haney returned to Idaho Falls very late that night without knowing the men and animals he assisted. Many thanks, Mr. Haney!

